

From The Assistant Commissioner ...



OAM Acting Assistant Commissioner
Felicia R. George

In October 1996, IDEM and the US EPA entered into an Environmental Performance Partnership Agreement, a blueprint for action by IDEM and US EPA as partners to protect and enhance Indiana's environmental resources.

One of the agreement's strategic goals is to meet state and federal health-related air quality standards in all areas of the state. In one way or another, these standards drive many of the Office of Air Management's programs, whether it is accurate and complete construction and operating permits,

effective and timely compliance assistance, development of new rules or other approaches to reducing air emissions, or enforcement (where necessary) to ensure that legal emission limits are met consistently.

Elsewhere in this issue, we describe US EPA's recent proposal to revise the ozone and particulate standards. If finalized, the revised ozone and particulate standards will have a profound effect upon Indiana's citizens and businesses. US EPA has determined that the current standards do not adequately protect public health, especially the health of sensitive populations such as those with respiratory illnesses, children and the elderly, with an adequate margin of safety. According to recent studies US EPA has analyzed, the revised standards will significantly reduce premature deaths, air-pollution related hospital visits, and missed days of work and school. They will significantly improve the quality of life for many of our citizens.

The revisions may also have an impact on activities that generate emissions which cause ozone and particulate pollution. Although any

new requirements resulting from these revisions are several years away, current technical work suggests that reductions of emissions from industry and motor vehicles will be necessary in order to meet the revised standards.

One of the most welcome ideas to come from the debates over the proposed standards, is that a fresh look is being taken at what it means to be a "nonattainment area."

Air quality scientists are finding that air pollution, especially ozone, is a much more regional phenomenon than originally thought. The old county by county approach simply doesn't reflect reality. Requiring emission reductions in a single county, or even a single metropolitan area, may not be effective in bringing healthy air to that area. US EPA's revisions to the standards will give IDEM an opportunity to adjust the planning and emissions reduction approach to this new understanding of how air pollution works.

IDEM will continue to work with Indiana citizens, municipalities and businesses to continue our progress toward cleaner air for all Hoosiers.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Felicia R. George".

Standard (continued from page 1)

The secondary standard must be set "to protect the public welfare from any known or anticipated adverse effects" including damage to crops and vegetation, wildlife, buildings and historical monuments, and visibility.

In setting the standards, the administrator is to consider the "latest scientific knowledge useful in indicating the kind and extent of all identifiable effects on public health

or welfare which may be expected from the presence of such pollutant in the ambient air, in varying quantities."

Once a standard has been set, the administrator must review it every five years to determine if more recent scientific work indicates that the standard remains sufficiently protective of the public health or welfare. Based on that review, the administrator may revise the stan-

dard or decide that it does not need to be changed.

US EPA has set primary and secondary standards for six pollutants. In some cases, the primary and secondary standards are the same.

Once a NAAQS is set for a pollutant, each state must determine if it has areas where air quality exceeds the levels permitted. For areas with unhealthy air, the state